

## A FEATHERED SAMSON.

### Marvelous Feats of Strength Performed by a Captive Macaw.

**The Athletic Bird Twists Iron Bars with His Bill and in Various Other Ways Displays His Wonderful Powers.**

They have a lot of wonderful animals at the Zoo, but the most wonderful of all just now is a bird. He is barred up behind three layers of heavy wire mesh, such as is used for coal sieves, and even this is hardly enough to relieve a constant feeling of suspicion concerning him. The bird is a species of the parrot known as the macaw, and his native country is Brazil. The warm breath of summer which we have had several recent touches of seems to have inspired him with a confidence peculiar to any feature that itself erects a home, and the activity of some of his exploits has surprised the keeper of the aviary as well as the officials of the gardens who have never had the opportunity of seeing the macaw on his native heath.

He has only been in this country a short time, says the Philadelphia Telegraph, and until a few days ago had sole possession of one of the row of cages along the eastern wall of the aviary. In an adjoining cage were a flock of talkative but peaceful cockatoos, with feathers as white as snow. He observed them with comparative indifference for a time, but a few nights ago he decided to make them a neighborly call, and now the garden is one cockatoo less in its group of specimens of winged creation. How it happened no one knew until the next morning, when when the macaw was found in the cockatoo cage, sitting comfortably on a perch, while beneath him lay a dead cock in the pit. The other cockatoos kept themselves as far as possible out of sight in a corner. Three bars of thick wire partition between the cages had been pulled out to make way for the macaw's exit. Apparently this might have been an easy thing for a man to do, but it is doubtful if a man could have done it more neatly or completely.

The macaw was not put back in his cage. He was given quarters in a private cage, a stout portable inclosure about three feet square, with a floor of galvanized sheet iron, and iron bars as thick as an ordinary lead pencil. The bars were supported around the sides with cross pieces, or stringers of thick iron, so that their length was not over six inches in any part of the cage. It was thought that the macaw was pretty safe in that kind of a cage, but to make assurance doubly sure he was placed in a small room in the corner of the aviary and the door closed, which proved a wise precaution. The next morning the keeper of the aviary nearly fell dead with paralysis to find the macaw at large, perched quietly on the top of a feed box. The box was empty.

With his jaw dropped with consternation the keeper, who had charge of all the birds that ever came there in

the twenty years of the garden's existence, stood and surveyed the scene. The bars on the heavy iron cage had not been pulled out as in the larger cage, but they had been bent and almost broken, leaving a space large enough for the macaw to make his exit. How he did it is still a puzzle for the Zoological society to solve, if not a puzzle for a good mechanical engineer familiar with the tensile and other properties of iron.

The keeper who found the bird first felt the bars with his fingers to see if they had been made out of soft metal by mistake, but they were not. Then he got a pair of plumber's plyers and tried to bend them straight again, but he had not force enough in his wrist to do it. Then he sat down and wiped the cold perspiration from his face and looked at the macaw with a suspicion that the bird must be supernatural, while the bird sat as serenely as possible, calmly returning his gaze. The macaw is a silent bird. He does not talk like other parrots.

The keeper secured the window and doors and went for advice and assistance. The macaw is back in its cage now, but the bars are still bent just as he left them, because there is not a pair of plyers in the garden strong enough to straighten them. Around the outside of the cage are the layers of the thick wire mesh of the kind used to sieve coal, hiding the bird almost completely from view, except at one corner left open to feed him.

The macaw's feat is the most astonishing thing that has been seen in the garden since it was founded. The bird is nothing but a parrot of somewhat extraordinary size, being over two feet in length, and having a head on him probably larger than a big Florida orange and an enormous bill for a bird. His plumage is dark and rather subdued in comparison with the smaller parrots, but it is very handsome. Since he twisted the bars of his cage the keepers are wary in handling him for fear he will get his fighting blood up and take a man's finger off, which he is capable of doing.

What will be done with him has not been determined yet. There was a proposition to confine him in the new bear pit, but it is probable that he will be put in an outdoor cage for the summer, where the bars are as thick as those used to confine the eagles and vultures. The strength of his bill is marvelous.

#### A Remarkable Shot.

A peculiar incident happened while the Sixth regiment of New York were engaged in rifle practice at the New Jersey state camp at Sea Girt. Lieut. R. R. Albertson was trying to qualify on the three-hundred-yard range. On his fifth shot three blackbirds flew across the range. The lieutenant's rifle cracked and one of the birds fell. At the same moment the signal target indicated that the lieutenant had scored four points, only one point from the center. An examination of the dead bird showed that the bullet in its flight for the target had passed through its breast.

## QUEER FOREIGN CUSTOMS.

THE Russian peasant never touches food or drink without making the sign of the cross.

FEMALE bootblacks are reported to be multiplying in Paris and other French cities.

NEWLY-MARRIED girls in Hungary offer their kisses for sale on St. Joseph's day, March 19.

JEWISH guides in Rome never pass under the arch of Titus, but walk around it. The reason is, it commemorates a victory over their race.

A LAW in Norway prohibits any person from spending more than five cents for liquor at one visit to a public house; and alcoholic stimulants are supplied only to sober persons.

## INTERESTING IF TRUE.

THE frigate bird, it is asserted, can fly two hundred miles in an hour.

THE starfish has no nose, but the whole of its underside is endowed with the sense of smell.

SOME insects pass several years in preparatory state of existence, and, finally, when perfect, live but a few hours.

SNAKES in South America fear the secretary bird, and will even crawl away from its shadow. This bird can easily thrash a snake twice its size.

DOCK HAWKINS, who lives near Macon, Ga., got up the other night to strike a match, but didn't go to the bureau for it, finding one nearer. The light disclosed a rattler, which he killed with an iron shoe last.

## HEARD AND OVERHEARD.

IN a shop—That a heart-shaped tea table is one of the new things.

IN a boudoir—That photographs must be placed in Louis XIV. frames.

IN a library—That the best designers of book covers in this country are women.

IN the country—That a morning canter on the back of one's thoroughbred is the thing everywhere.

AT a garden party—That one of the stunning costumes was a kilt-plaited skirt of light mauve crepe de chine.

AT a wedding—That the bride's gifts to her maids were exquisite fans, with a picture of herself painted in one corner.

## A TRIFLE FRENCHY.

THE French census shows a total of 390,000 foreign work people.

THE French government pays its representative at London \$60,000 a year.

FRANCE has the largest public debt of any country in the world. It amounts to \$6,130,000,000.

THE French courts have recently decided that a woman's dot or marriage portion is the property of her husband.

ACCORDING to M. Flammarion, the great astronomer, the mean temperature of Paris for the past six years has been two degrees below the normal.